



Public Opinion and Lexington's Smoke-free Law
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Purpose of the research study: To evaluate changes in attitudes toward Lexington's smoke-free law, adults' social practices, protection from secondhand smoke (SHS) at work and home, and the effect of the law on adults' health.

Background: Each year tobacco use kills 440,000 Americans,¹ and nearly 53,000 nonsmokers in this country die from lung cancer and heart disease due to secondhand smoke exposure.² In 2004, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) issued a warning that all persons with heart disease should avoid all indoor environments that permit smoking.³ In Kentucky, cigarette smoking claims nearly 8,000 lives⁴ and costs \$1.17 billion in health care expenditures¹ each year. In spite of the enormous economic burden caused by tobacco use, Kentucky spends only \$2.7 million per year for tobacco prevention and cessation (10.8% of the CDC recommended spending) and ranks 39th nationally in spending on tobacco prevention.⁵ In contrast, the tobacco industry spends \$346.4 million each year marketing tobacco products in Kentucky.⁶

Kentucky leads the nation in smoking, with 31 percent of adults⁷ and 33 percent of high school students reporting current smoking.⁸ Only about a third of those living in the United States are protected from secondhand smoke by strong laws requiring smoke-free workplaces.⁹

On April 27, 2004, Lexington-Fayette County implemented a smoke-free ordinance prohibiting smoking in all public buildings including restaurants, bars, bingo parlors, pool halls, public areas of hotels/motels, and all other buildings open to the public. The ordinance was scheduled to go into effect on September 26, 2003, but there was a 7-month delay in enforcement due to a legal challenge. Lexington-Fayette County is the only community in Kentucky with a smoke-free law.

Studies of public attitudes toward smoke-free laws have shown that patrons increasingly support and comply with smoke-free laws in restaurants and bars.^{10, 11} Smoke-free laws have been shown to have little impact on the dining out patterns of consumers.¹²

Study Methods: Two cohorts of Lexington-Fayette County non-institutionalized adults (18 years or older) were randomly selected by a modified Waksberg Random-Digit Dialing method giving every household telephone line in Lexington-Fayette County an equal probability of being contacted. The UK Survey Research Center contacted subjects by

telephone, described the purpose of the study, assured anonymity, and asked for their participation in a 10-15 minute phone survey (see Appendix for survey questions).

Cohort I ($N = 1,091$) was recruited and interviewed from July 19-August 17, 2003, prior to the original implementation date of the ordinance (September 26, 2003). Cohort II ($N = 1,055$) was recruited and interviewed from October 4-November 22, 2004, approximately six months after the ordinance had been in effect.

For the pre-ordinance survey (Cohort I), the response rate was 46.1%, and the margin of error was approximately $\pm 2.97\%$ at the 95 percent confidence level. For the post-ordinance survey (Cohort II), the response rate was 52%, and the margin of error was approximately $\pm 3.02\%$ at the 95 percent confidence level.

Findings:

Attitudes toward the Smoke-free Law

- Support for Lexington's smoke-free law has increased significantly since the law went into effect. Nearly two-thirds of Fayette county adults support the law (Post-law = 64.0 versus Pre-law = 56.7).
- Since the law took effect, almost three-fourths (74.2%) of Fayette County adults think it is very or somewhat important that all public buildings including restaurants and bars are smoke-free (compared to 69.6% Pre-law).
- Participants were asked which they agreed with more: protecting workers from secondhand smoke or the right to smoke:
 - Six in 10 adults (60.9%) agree that people who work in bars and restaurants should be protected from exposure to secondhand smoke, even if this means smoking is not allowed at all in bars and restaurants.
 - Four in 10 adults (39.2%) agree that people who go to bars and restaurants should have the right to smoke there even though this means people who work there will be exposed to secondhand smoke.

Social Practices

- Seven in 10 adults (72.0%) go to a restaurant in Lexington at least weekly. This is a slight decrease from the pre-law period (75.8%).
- Most participants (82.2%) reported that post-ordinance they go to restaurants more often or about as often as before the smoke-free law went into effect.
- Three in 10 adults (31.7%) go to a bar or nightclub in Lexington at least monthly. This is not significantly different than the percent of adults who reported they went to bars or nightclubs at least once a month pre-ordinance (27.5%).
- Three-fourths (75.5%) reported that post-ordinance they go to bars more often or about as often as before the smoke-free law went into effect.
- Fifteen percent of adults (15.4%) go to a bowling alley, bingo hall, or racetrack at least monthly. This is not significantly different than the percent of adults who reported they went to these other public places at least once a month pre-ordinance (14.9%).

- Most participants (84.7%) reported that post-ordinance they go to other public places such as bowling alleys, bingo halls, racetracks, etc. more often or about as often as before the smoke-free law went into effect.
- Of those who smoked cigarettes, over three-fourths (76.4%) reported that they always complied with the smoke-free law by not smoking inside public buildings; 14.6% reported they sometimes complied with the law and 8.9% said ‘never.’

Protection from Secondhand Tobacco Smoke at Work and Home

- Since the law took effect, 8 of 10 adults (80.3%) who work indoors and outside the home report that smoking is not allowed anywhere inside the building at work.
- While a higher percentage of adults are protected from SHS at work compared to before the law took effect (71.5%), 20% of adults who work indoors and outside the home in Lexington are still exposed to secondhand smoke at work.
- Three-fourths of adults (74.5%) report that no one has smoked cigarettes, cigars, or pipes anywhere inside their home in the past 30 days. This is not significantly different than the percent of adults who reported a smoke-free home pre-ordinance (74.6%).

The Smoke-free Law and Health

- Over three-fourths of adults (76.2%) are very or somewhat concerned about the health effects of SHS. This perceived concern has increased significantly since the law took effect (71.7% Pre-Law).
- Three-fourths of adults (74.7%) think exposure to SHS is a moderate to serious health hazard. This perception of harm has increased significantly since the law took effect (70.2% Pre-Law).
- Of those smokers who tried to quit in the last 12 months, 44.1% tried quitting since the law took effect.
- Of those who tried quitting since the law took effect, 25.0% reported quitting altogether.
- Of those who had asthma, 30.4% reported decreased asthma symptoms since the law took effect.

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Appendix Survey Questions

Attitudes Toward the Smoke-Free Law

Question: On April 27, 2004, the law prohibiting smoking in most public places in Lexington went into effect, including all enclosed public buildings, restaurants, and bars. Would you say that you strongly support, somewhat support, somewhat oppose, or strongly oppose the new law?

NOTE: The pre-ordinance question was stated, “On July 1, 2003, the Lexington-Fayette Urban County Council passed a law prohibiting smoking in most public places in Lexington including.....Would you say that you strongly support, somewhat support....”

Question: How important is it to you to have a smoke-free environment inside all public buildings including restaurants and bars? Is it very important, somewhat important, not too important or not at all important?

Question: Which of these two statements do you agree with more?

- (A) People who go to bars and restaurants should have the right to smoke there even though this means people who work there will be exposed to secondhand smoke.
- (B) People who work in bars and restaurants should be protected from exposure to secondhand smoke, even if this means smoking is not allowed at all in bars and restaurants.

(Follow up) Would you say you strongly agree or somewhat agree with that statement?

NOTE: A split sample design was used on this question to avoid response order bias.

Adult Social Practices

Question: About how often do you go to a restaurant in Lexington?

- More than once a week
- About once a week
- A few times a month
- Less than once a month
- Never

Question: About how often do you go to a bar or nightclub in Lexington?

- More than once a week
- About once a week
- A few times a month
- Less than once a month
- Never

Question: About how often do you go to a bowling alley, bingo hall, or racetrack in Lexington?

- More than once a week
- About once a week
- A few times a month
- Less than once a month
- Never

The following 4 questions were only asked post-ordinance

Question: Since the smoke-free law took effect on April 27th, have you gone to restaurants more often, less often, or about as often as before the smoke-free law went into effect?

Question: Since the smoke-free law took effect, have you gone to bars more often, less often, or about as often as before the smoke-free law went into effect?

Question: Since the smoke-free law went into effect, have you gone to other public places such as bowling alleys, bingo halls, racetracks, etc. more often, less often, or about as often as before the smoke-free law went into effect?

Question: How often do you comply with the smoke-free law by not smoking inside public buildings? Do you comply always, sometimes, or never? (of those who smoke)

Protection from Secondhand Smoke at Work and Home

Question: I am going to read you a list of typical workplace smoking policies. Please tell me which one is most like the policy at your workplace (of those who worked outside the home in primarily an indoor work environment)

- Smoking is not allowed anywhere inside the building
- Smoking is only allowed in a few designated smoking areas inside
- Smoking is allowed in most areas inside
- No smoking policy

Question: In the past 30 days, has anyone, including yourself, smoked cigarettes, cigars, or pipes anywhere inside your home? (YES or NO)

The Smoke-free Law and Health

Question: How concerned are you about the health effects of secondhand tobacco smoke? Would you say very concerned, somewhat concerned, not too concerned, or not at all concerned?

Question: In general, do you feel that exposure to secondhand smoke is a serious health hazard, a moderate health hazard, a minor health hazard, or not a hazard at all?

The following 3 questions were only asked post-ordinance:

Question: Since the law took effect in April, have you tried to quit smoking? (of those smokers who reported they had tried to quit smoking in the past 12 months)

Question: Since the law took effect, have you quit smoking altogether? (of those who had tried to quit smoking since the law took effect)

Question: Have your asthma symptoms increased, decreased, or stayed the same since the smoke-free law took effect in April? (of those who said a health care provider had ever told them that they had asthma)